CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 17 MARCH 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A STATEMENT MADE BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON 12 MARCH 1999 IN CONNECTION WITH THE OFFICIAL ENTRY OF POLAND, HUNGARY AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC INTO NATO

I have the honour to attach a statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on 12 March 1999 in connection with the official entry of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into NATO.

I would be grateful if this statement could be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distributed among the delegations of all member States of the Conference and non-member States of the CD participating in the work of the Conference.

(Signed) Vasily S. Sidorov
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation to the
Conference on Disarmament

STATEMENT

by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Today Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic officially join the North Atlantic Alliance. In this connection I would like to emphasize that Russia's attitude to NATO enlargement has not changed, and remains negative. The enlargement of the North Atlantic Alliance will not be conducive to the strengthening of trust and stability in international relations, but on the contrary may lead to the creation of new lines of division. We do not desire such a development. It is not in the interests of the peoples of our continent.

For its part, and as a constructive alternative to the enlargement, Russia is pursuing, and advocates the stepping up of, efforts to create a European security architecture which would safeguard the interests of all States without exception - both members and non-members of particular military-political alliances. We are convinced that the construction of a reliable system of European security and stability is possible only on a pan-European basis, in a context of unswerving respect for international law, and using the potential of OSCE as the most representative and universal all-European organization which can address all the challenges of the twenty-first century - political, economic, military and humanitarian. We call on all interested countries to speedily draw up and adopt at the OSCE summit in November this year a European Security Charter - an important document which would expand and translate into reality the vision of a single zone of democracy and security, and would contain practical agreements on the principles underpinning the European architecture, on mutual relations, and on cooperation between European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

Of special significance now, following NATO enlargement, is the question of the adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (the CFE Treaty). It is Russia's presumption that the obligation assumed by all States parties to the Treaty to complete work by the end of March on key aspects of the adaptation of the Treaty to the new circumstances will be discharged, and that this very important instrument for stability will retain its effectiveness.

Russia is also continuing its active efforts to make use of the potential of the Russia-NATO Founding Act and Permanent Joint Council with the aim of establishing relations of genuine partnership between Russia and the North Atlantic Alliance, and preventing any actions which might jeopardize the goal of moulding a single Euro-Atlantic area of stability, democracy and cooperation without lines of division. We count on the understanding and conciliatory attitude of our partners. Only this process - and not backsliding into the logic of the "cold war" - can ensure peace and prosperity.

Moscow, 12 March 1999